

## **CLAIMS**

1. A process for preparing an aqueous composition, comprising heating an aqueous mixture comprising
  - 1.5 to 45 wt.% of whey protein concentrate, calculated as dried product,
  - 1 to 15 wt.% of starch,
  - 0.15 to 6 wt.% of a first hydrocolloid, and
  - 0.03 to 3 wt.% of a second hydrocolloidto a temperature in the range of 60 to 100°C for a period of 1 to 120 minutes.
2. The process of claim 1, wherein the whey protein concentrate is in liquid or powder form.
3. The process of any of claim 1 or 2, wherein the starch is selected from one or more of waxy maize starch, corn starch, pea starch, wheat starch and potato starch.
4. The process of any of claims 1 to 3, wherein the first hydrocolloid is selected from one or more gums and the second hydrocolloid is selected from one or more gel-forming heteropolysaccharides.
5. The process of claim 4, wherein the gum is carob bean gum, guar gum, gum arabic, xanthan gum or tara bean gum.
6. The process of claim 4 or 5, wherein the gel-forming heteropolysaccharide is carrageenan or agar.
7. The process of any of claims 1 to 6, wherein the process is carried out under pressure.

8. An aqueous composition obtainable by the process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 7.

9. Use of the aqueous composition as claimed in claim 8 as a texturizing and/or stabilizing agent in dairy products.

10. The use of claim 9, wherein the dairy product is selected from yogurt, sour milk, cream cheeses and soft white cheeses.

11. The use of claim 9 or 10, wherein the dairy product is a low fat dairy product.

12. The use of any of claims 9 to 11, wherein the dairy product is a high protein dairy product.

13. The use of claim 12 wherein the dairy product is low fat/high protein soft white cheese.

14. A food composition comprising a dairy product base and an aqueous composition as claimed in claim 8 in a ratio, based on the food composition, of

30 to 80 wt.% of the dairy product base and  
70 to 20 wt.% of the aqueous composition.

15. The food composition of claim 14, wherein the dairy product base is selected from bases for yogurt, sour milk, cream cheese and soft white cheese.

16. The food composition of claim 14 or 15, wherein the dairy product base is a low fat dairy product base.

17. The food composition of any of claims 14 to 16, wherein the dairy product base is a high protein dairy product base.

18. The food composition of claim 17 wherein the dairy product base is low fat/high protein soft white cheese base.